

Small Game Harvest 2002-03

By Brian Dhuey

Abstract

The number of small game hunters decreased 4.7% in the 2002-03 small game hunting season from 2001-02 levels. It is the second year in a row that license sales decreased and are the lowest since 1997. The estimated harvest increased from last season for quail, cottontail, coyote, crow, pheasant, and squirrel and decreased for all other species surveyed.

Methods

A sample of survey names was drawn from 2002-03 sports, small game, senior citizen small game, junior small game, and conservation patron license holders in proportion to the license sales for each county. Ten thousand surveys were mailed in early February. Surveys asked recipients for information on whether they hunted, type of licenses purchased, county of residence, species harvested, number of days hunting each species, and county of harvest for each species. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Responses were received from 3,247 of the hunters surveyed. The response rate was 32%.

The number of people who bought small game, sportsman, senior citizen small game, non-resident small game, 5-day non-resident small game, or conservation patron licenses decreased from 304,202 in 2001-02 to 289,873 in 2002-2003. The total number of days spent in the field pursuing small game decreased by 10% during the 2002-03 season compared to last season. The estimated harvest increased from last season for quail, cottontail, coyote, crow, pheasant, and squirrel and decreased for all other species surveyed (Table 1).

No corrections are made for response or prestige bias. Therefore the harvest estimates for some of the less hunted species (Bobwhite Quail, Gray Partridge, and Gray Fox,) are probably less accurate. Small sample size can also have an effect on the results of the counties of highest harvest. Because of this, counties of highest harvest should be viewed with caution. The twenty-year trend in small game harvest for all species is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. *The number of small game hunters, percent of total hunters, days hunted, harvest, harvest/day, and top three counties of harvest for all small game species during the 2002-03 season.*

Species	Number of Hunters	Percent Hunting	Days Hunted*		Harvest*		Harvest/Day	Top Three Counties
Bobwhite Quail	1,246	0.4	4,732	±3,688	1,607	±1,504	0.34	Dodge, Oconto, Manitowoc
Cottontail	50,351	17.4	251,128	±35,185	205,777	±33,865	0.82	Grant, Brown, Trempealeau
Coyote	25,712	8.9	159,354	±31,000	34,460	±13,145	0.22	Clark, Marathon, Rock
Crow	14,726	5.1	63,831	±16,709	75,080	±26,670	1.18	Monroe, Pepin, Oconto
Gray Fox	6,870	2.4	38,477	±14,033	14,462	±9,227	0.38	Columbia, Juneau, Marquette
Gray Partridge	1,710	0.6	8,035	±4,474	1,071	±925	0.13	Brown, Rock, Green
Pheasant	77,744	26.8	511,808	±46,279	250,057	±31,107	0.49	Dane, Kenosha, Dodge
Raccoon	11,972	4.1	111,682	±33,108	194,707	±69,031	1.74	Oconto, Trempealeau, Green
Red Fox	9,740	3.4	53,654	±16,089	5,267	±2,619	0.10	Columbia, Outagamie, Brown
Ruffed Grouse	106,847	36.9	692,053	±52,985	259,163	±32,130	0.37	Price, Marinette, Oneida
Snowshoe Hare	11,682	4.0	52,136	±17,681	16,694	±5,815	0.32	Lincoln, Price, Oneida
Squirrel	76,961	26.6	455,834	±49,280	525,914	±81,346	1.15	Grant, Marinette, Dane
Woodcock	18,117	6.3	102,933	±20,042	47,583	±13,079	0.46	Marinette, Ashland, Price

* Confidence interval is 95%.

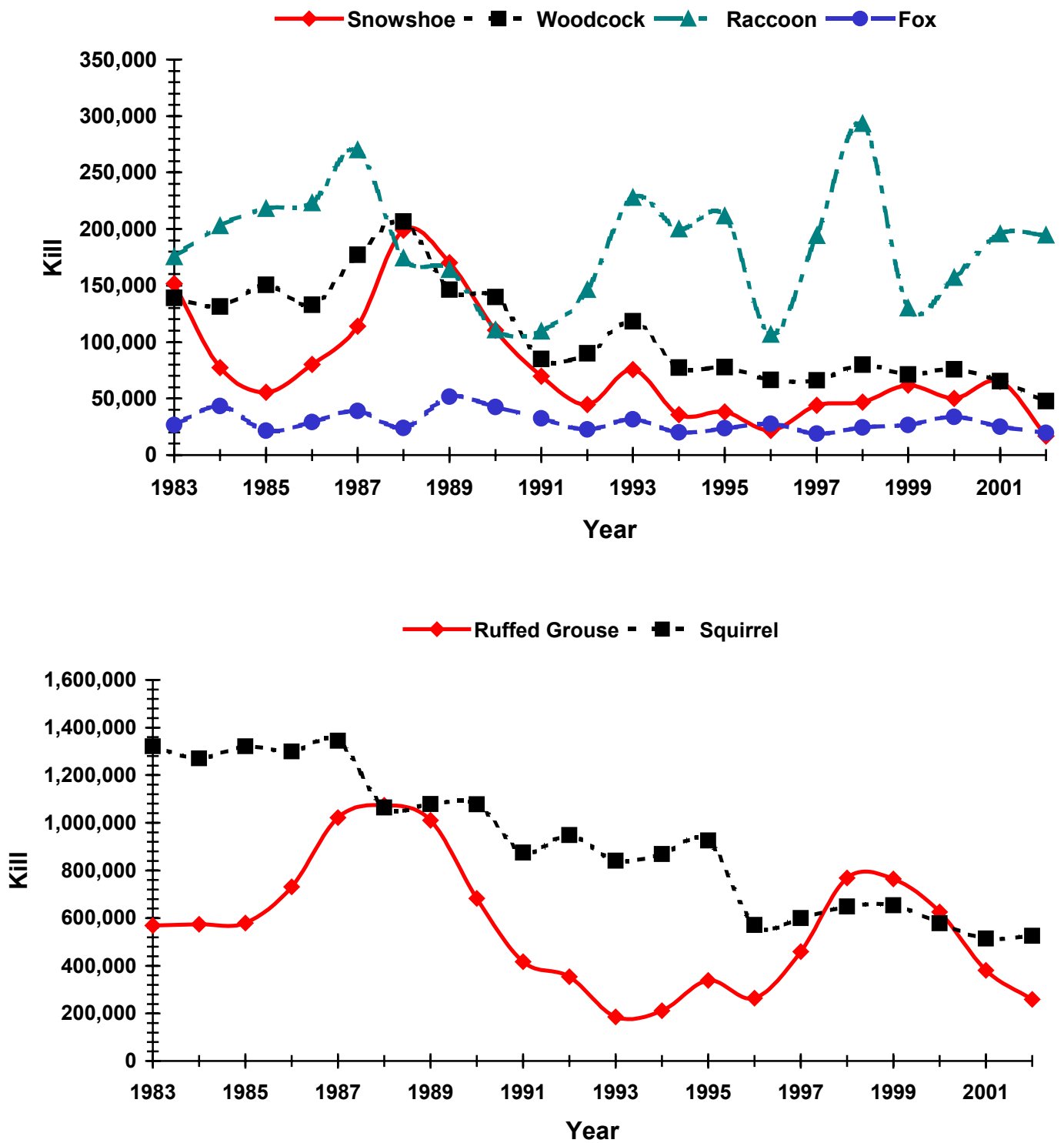


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2002.

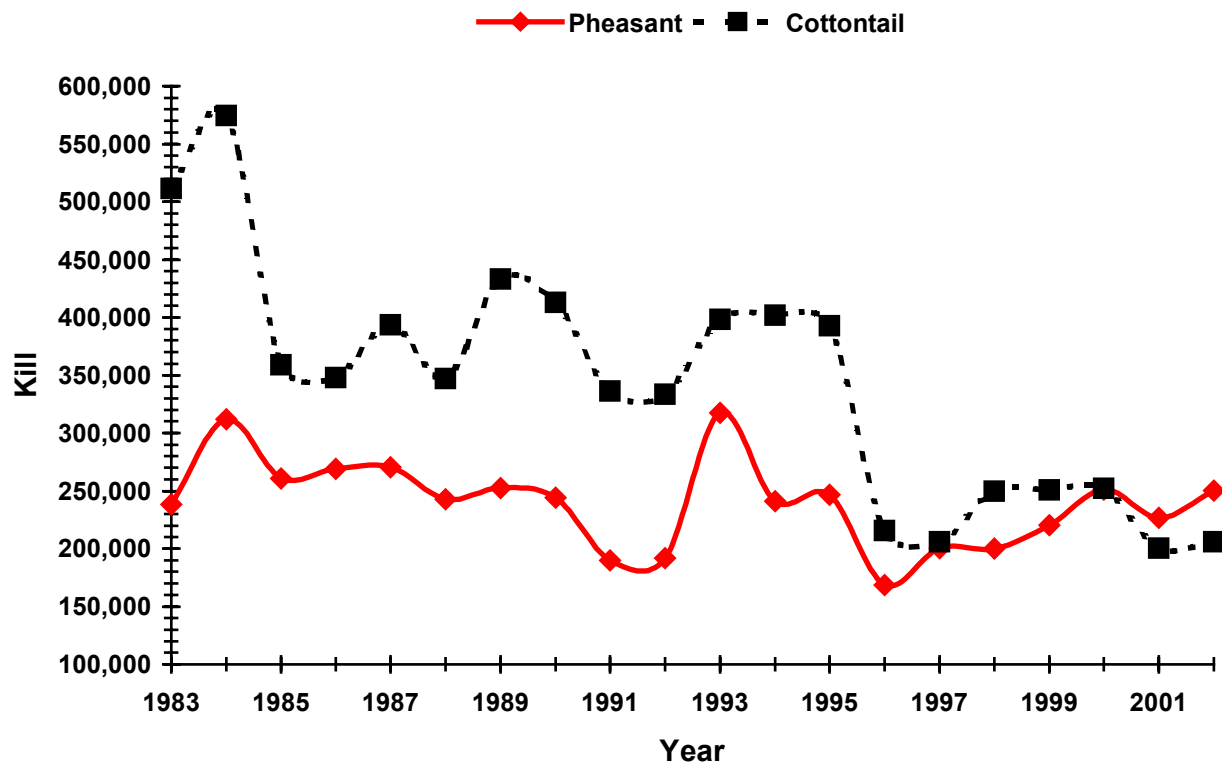
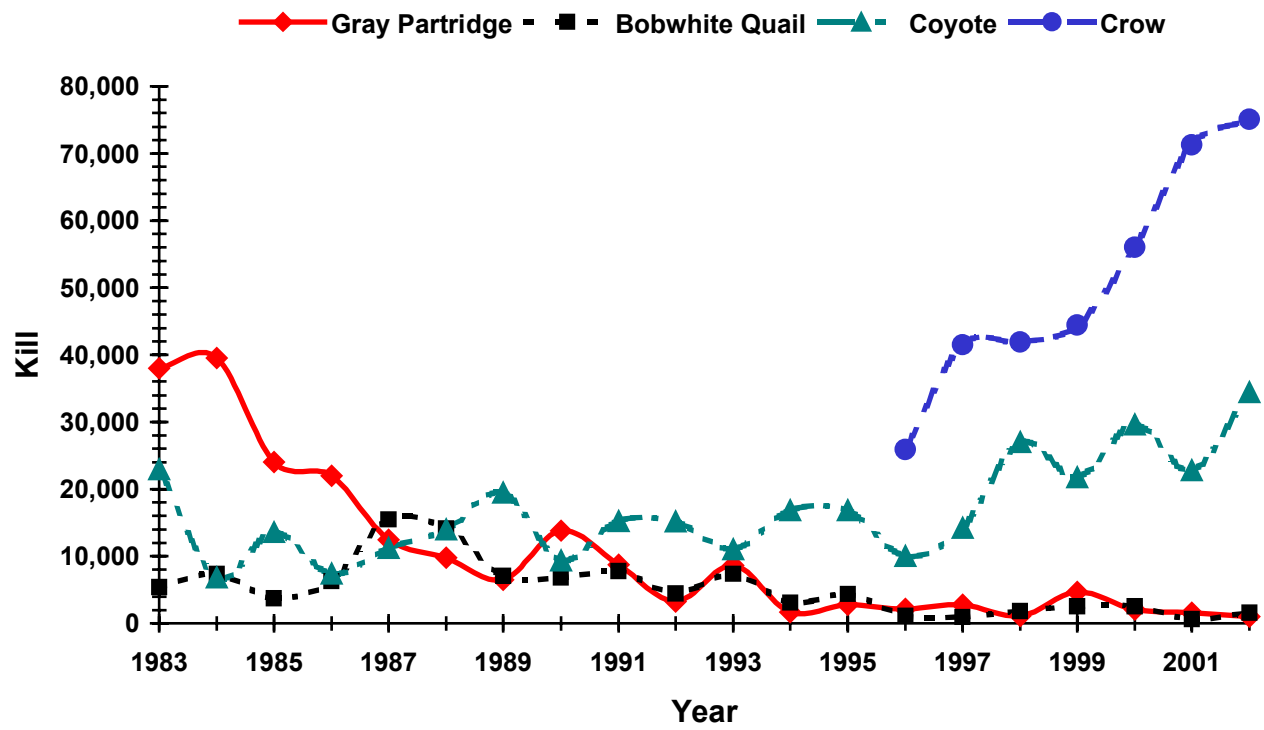


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2002 (continued).